

Transition Related Frequently-Asked-Questions

There were a number of questions that emerged following the Transition Next Steps Gathering held on June 9th in Midland. While this certainly isn't an exhaustive list, these are some common themes we could identify and answer as our community continues our collective discernment.

If we vote for Scenario #1, when would an election take place?

If the Convention voted for Scenario #1, the diocese would enter a (mostly) traditional bishop search process. The Standing Committee would gather nominations and appoint members to the Search and Transition Committees. The Search Committee would work with our Transition Consultant, the Rev. Dr. Diane Vie, and the Episcopal Church Office of Pastoral Development to compile a diocesan profile using the information gathered during our self-study gatherings. The profile would be published, names gathered, a slate chosen and announced, and the election would take place at the 25th Diocesan Convention in Fall 2019.

If we vote for Scenario #2, when would a provisional election take place?

If the Convention voted for Scenario #2, the Standing Committee would work with the Office of Pastoral Development of the Episcopal Church to identify and interview candidates to serve as a long-term bishop provisional full-time for 3-5 years. Because it is a provisional position, the candidates must already be consecrated bishops – not priests. Just as the election of Bishop Waynick, the Standing Committee would present one candidate to a convention of the diocese. Depending on availability and logistics, the electing convention could take place as a Special Convention in Spring 2019 or at the annual Diocesan Convention in Fall 2019.

Can we elect Bishop Waynick as our Scenario #2, long-term provisional?

No. In addition to pension requirements preventing full-time employment, Bishop Waynick and her husband, Larry, are looking forward to living more deeply into her retirement. She is willing to be with us for up to one additional year or until another bishop is elected (diocesan or provisional) with the consent of the Standing Committee and Diocesan Convention.

The 24th Diocesan Convention in Fall 2018 will be asked to elect her again, extending her provisional status for up to one year or before, should a bishop be elected or available before the next convention.

If we vote for Scenario #3, when does juncture take place?

There is no guarantee that juncture would take place.

Both dioceses would enter into a 3-5 year discovery period where we would study, spend time together in relationship, and begin to intentionally combine certain ministries and resources.

Each diocese would have the chance to live into this time of experimentation and discovery before committing to a formal juncture.

A juncture would not take place until and unless each diocesan convention voted to do so and the General Convention of the Episcopal Church voted to confirm. We anticipate that the soonest the General Convention would vote on a hypothetical juncture would be 2024.

What is the current parish tithing structure in the Diocese of Western Michigan?

According to the Canons of the Diocese of Western Michigan, apportionment is based on each parish's net operating income as reported in their Parochial Report. The apportionment is a tiered system, with different percentages depending on the amount of net operating income. This is their formula:

- 10% of the first \$75,000 (\$1 - \$75,000)
- 12% of the second \$75,000 (\$75,001 - \$150,000)
- 14% of the third \$75,000 (\$150,001 - \$225,000)
- 16% of any amount above \$225,001

The current formula for Eastern Michigan is a flat 10% based on the congregation's total operating revenue.

Should Scenario #3 be chosen, parish tithe or apportionment is one of the many areas of discernment and conversation that we would engage with over the next 3-5 years as part of the discovery period.

Is Bishop Hougland willing to ordain locally formed clergy?

Yes. Bishop Hougland has committed to continuing to form and ordain locally trained clergy – both priests and deacons – in Eastern Michigan. He continues to work with congregations in Western Michigan to discern openness and readiness in that diocese to locally formed priests in addition to those already in process and ordained deacons through local formation.

Has our leadership considered a fundraising campaign to bolster diocesan finances?

Yes. Regardless of the scenario chosen by the Convention, we expect the diocese will engage in some kind of fundraising campaign.

In April, Bishop Waynick gathered a team from the Standing Committee and diocesan staff to attend Project Resource, a program organized by the Office of Development of the Episcopal Church. The training covered many aspects of giving, both for diocesan and congregational campaigns. As of right now (September 2018) there are two pilot projects in congregations using the information from Project Resource. We expect to use the information from those pilot projects and the resources from the training to hold a fundraising stronger workshop day in 2019

or 2020. The stronger financial health our congregations are in, the stronger financial health our diocesan community will be in.

If we vote for Scenario #3, where would the diocesan office be located?

Office location would be one of the many areas of discernment and conversation that we would engage with over the next 3-5 years as part of the discovery period.

We expect options could include moving an office to a central location or moving regionally to several smaller satellite offices throughout the various regions.

If we vote for Scenario #3, how would bishop visitations take place?

We expect that Eastern Michigan congregations would gradually be added to Bishop Hougland's regular visitation schedule. Like with Bishop Waynick, some visitations may take place on days other than Sunday morning to allow more opportunities.

How has Western Michigan engaged in the question of Scenario #3?

Bishop Hougland has intentionally engaged congregations with the ongoing conversation of collaboration with Eastern Michigan during his regular visitations and has included the question of collaboration as part of his preaching during recent diocesan-wide services.

In September, he released a video detailing the path of the Western Michigan diocesan restructuring and the conversation with Eastern Michigan. You can view that here: youtu.be/N2koejHmNKI.

The diocesan household will be discussing the possibility further during their upcoming pre-convention meetings, at their diocesan convention in November, and in gatherings scheduled for the Spring.

Where can we see information on diocesan finances?

The transition section of the diocesan website makes available the previous five years' budgets as well as the approved budget for the next three years as well as end-of-year financial statements for the previous five years. As a courtesy, Western Michigan has also provided some financial information for our discernment process. That information is available here: eastmich.org/bishop-transition/financials/

Additional budgets are available in each year's Convention Journal, also always available on the diocesan website, here: eastmich.org/convention